

Commencing the Teaching Journey - How Time Impacts on the Lives of Young First- Year Teachers

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Please note also that this research is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

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Abstract

Commencing the Teaching Journey: How Time Impacts on the Lives of Young First-Year Teachers

Over the next decade the Australian school teaching workforce will see many senior teachers move into retirement, with young early career teachers replacing them. As a result, developing a better understanding of what these teachers face when commencing their careers is important. This thesis explores the impact that time as a construct has on the professional and personal lives of First-Year Generation Y (FYGY) secondary school teachers in New South Wales (NSW).

The study considered time as: a resource with its associated connection to workload, as a context for the experience of a phenomenon, and as a process in regard to the different stages or phases that the participating FYGY teachers encountered as they began their careers.

An interpretive qualitative approach was employed with situated learning theory underpinning the research. Data collection took place through a series of lengthy interviews that involved ten participants in a relational sharing process that occurred at three separate points during their first year of teaching. In analysing the data, eleven themes related to time were inductively derived and these were used to focus discussion on what young beginning secondary school teachers think, feel and experience when situated in their first year of teaching. Narrative inquiry was used to document what the participating teachers encountered and experienced, with their stories providing the means to explore important issues and concepts. Finally, the study considered what can be done, in light of the specific characteristics that FYGY teachers exhibit and the professional supports made available, to assist them as they begin teaching, so there is a stronger likelihood that they will commit to long-term careers in schools.